



Net Zero Villages Highlights



Introduction

Net Zero Villages Capital Grant Scheme was made available to help rural communities across the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) area.

- Total funding was £1 million, split per authority according to rural population and deprivation indicators
- Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) awarded £285,974, a proportion for admin
- Open for applications: 16th December 2024 to 26th January 2025
- Project completion 28th February 2026
- Applicant projects geographically located in Huntingdonshire
- Market towns of St Neots, St Ives and Huntingdon excluded from this application.



Introduction

All District Councils within the Cambridgeshire area were offered funding with the exception of areas as detailed:

Council area	Excluded areas
East Cambridgeshire District Council	Ely, Soham
Fenland District Council	Chatteris, March, Wisbech, Whittlesey
Huntingdonshire District Council	Huntingdon, St Neots, St Ives
South Cambridgeshire District Council	Those areas classified by ONS as part of Cambridge built-up area
Peterborough City Council	Excluding Peterborough City area



Grant Scheme

Grants were given between £5,000 and £50,000 to retrofit community assets and reduce carbon emissions by:

- Making rural community buildings more energy-efficient
- Enabling access to public transport
- Using nature based solutions to tackle overheating of buildings.

This scheme helped to contribute towards the CPCA's, HDC's and Cambridgeshire's decarbonisation goals.



Applications

As well as contributing towards decarbonisation goals, projects needed to demonstrate that their project:

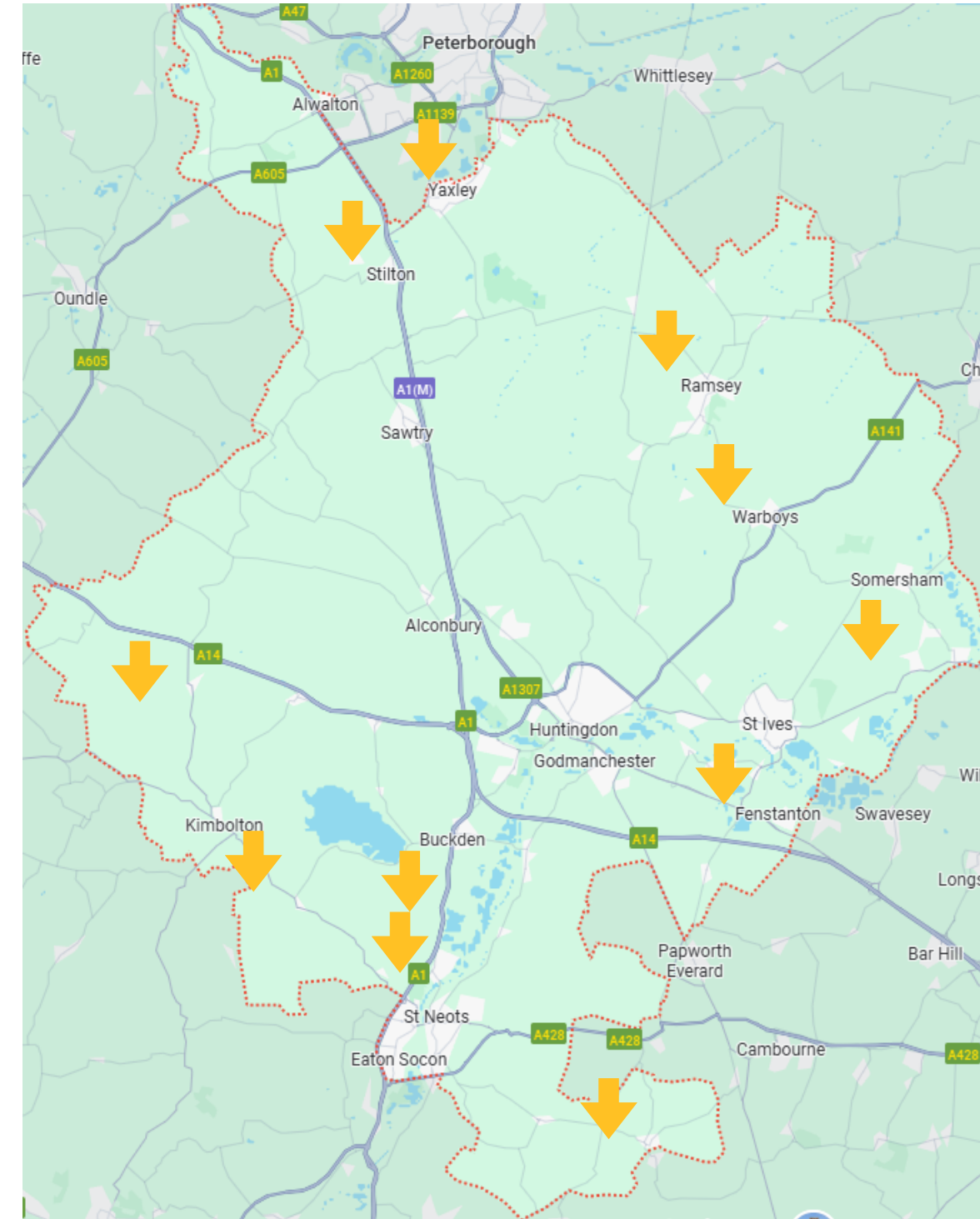
- Reduced running costs of community facilities
- Can be replicated
- Ensures the community are engaged in changes of behaviour towards tackling climate change
- Reduced carbon emission
- Reduced energy consumption
- Reduced overheating of a building.



Applications

There were 32 applications with 11 successful applicants from around Huntingdonshire.

Bluntisham	Ramsey
Catworth	Southoe and Midloe
Fenstanton	Stilton
Great Gransden	Warboys
Great Staughton	Yaxley
Little Paxton	



Net Zero Villages Projects

Bluntisham - The David Morris Community Room

Grant awarded: £7,500

- Solar panels to fully fund all electricity
- Batteries and WiFi access via App.

Estimated financial savings and carbon savings:

- Peak summer energy bills showed account in credit
- Currently tied into energy supplier with no buy-back option
- Providing summary savings report end 2026.



“The Net Zero Grant has enabled the parish council to install solar panels to our recently refurbished community room. Previously this building wasn’t used and now it has been given a new lease of life without additional cost to the parish. The parish council are grateful for the grant given by Huntingdonshire District Council.”

Mark Berg, Chairman Bluntisham Parish Council



Net Zero Villages Projects

Catworth Pavillion

Grant awarded: £12,142.42 (£589.18 underspend repaid)

- Solar panels 10.56 kWp
- Batteries 10 kW to store energy.

Estimated financial savings and carbon savings:

- No evidence to date as smart meter only fitted February 2026
- Anticipated 32% of the energy generated will be used and the remaining 68% exported to the grid.



"...will have a positive impact on reducing the running costs of the playing field in the long-term as well as providing clean, green energy to run the pavilion."

Daniel Green, Parish Councillor



Net Zero Villages Projects

Fenstanton access to local services through low carbon transport

Grant awarded: £34,450

- Provide access to sustainable public transport for 90 properties
- Delivery of shared footway-cycleway.

Estimated carbon savings:

- The Connecting Fenstanton project provides access to essential services such as the village post office and retail at St Ives and Bar Hill
- Improved air quality in the medium term through reduced private vehicle congestion.



“I’m delighted that the Connecting Fenstanton project has been delivered following a successful application to the Connecting Net Zero Villages initiative. The project will provide better connectivity to sustainable travel options and village amenities for parishioners, which is something I’m very passionate about. Fenstanton Parish Council would like to acknowledge the support of the Net Zero Villages initiative, without whom, it would not have been possible to undertake this project.”

Matt Tandy, Councillor, Fenstanton Parish Council



Net Zero Villages Projects

Great Gransden Reading Room and Bowls and Croquet Club

Grant awarded: £17,999 (*underspend £5,613.13 repaid*)

- 10 Solar PV panels installed on Bowls and Croquet Club roof connected to electricity supply to both buildings
- 10 kWh storage battery in Reading Room to supply clean energy to both premises
- Insulation of roof space at Bowls and Croquet Club.



"...Solar Project has reduced our energy costs and carbon footprint to near zero, helping to secure a bright, clean future for our village. ...together provide a range of activities for Great Gransden, promoting our village and helping to improve the health and wellbeing of residents."

Phil Taylor, Committee Member
Great Gransden Bowls and Croquet Club



Net Zero Villages Projects

Great Gransden Reading Room and Bowls and Croquet Club

Estimated financial savings and carbon savings:

- Costs are already reducing as we have been able to store lower-cost night-time electricity during the winter.



"...we greatly appreciate the support and funding from the Place and Climate Team. This grant-supported solar project will enable us to reduce our carbon footprint and save on energy bills at this vital community venue. Our weekly café and the After School and Holiday Clubs are both significant consumers of electricity, most of which will now be supplied by solar for much of the year."

Anne Constantine, Chair, Reading Room Management Committee



Net Zero Villages Projects

Great Staughton Village Hall

Grant awarded: £12,300

- Replace oil-fired heating system with an electric Air Source Heat Pump.

Estimated financial savings and carbon savings:

- EPC rating went from E in April 2025 to B in November 2025
- Estimated CO₂ savings of 3.21CO₂e(t) (7.13CO₂e(t) to 3.92CO₂e(t) (*numbers from the Allia, UK Government Green Business Impact scheme*).



“As a small, rural community we could not possibly have afforded to replace the heating on our own. Removal of Oil Tank allows us to have no need for fossil fuels in the Hall. This stops oil tankers coming in and prevents us from polluting our community.”

Helen Glanville, Treasurer
Great Staughton Village Hall



Net Zero Villages Projects

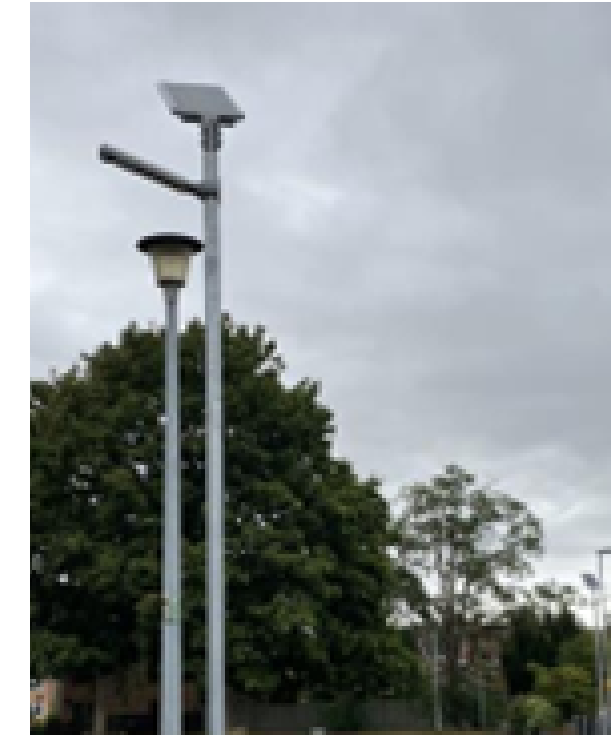
Little Paxton Parish Council Solar Street Lights

Grant awarded: £35,400

- Project enabled replacement of existing street lights (>30 years-old) with 17 new solar 5 metre street light columns, lanterns and batteries
- Providing safe ambient light.

Estimated financial savings and carbon savings:

- The Council's street light energy bill has reduced from £318.75 per month to £94.18 per month.
- Street light energy contract due for renewal 31 March 2026 and by then there will only be 9 electric street lights remaining.



Old light and new solar light

"Little Paxton Parish Council is delighted to be awarded the Net Zero Villages Grant for the Parish Council Solar Street Light Project. ... The solar lights will be more energy efficient and environmentally friendly and will reduce energy costs...safe ambient light using natural energy will encourage more active travel in the dark evenings."

Cllr Kathy Bishop, Chairperson Little Paxton Parish Council



Net Zero Villages Projects

Ramsey Pavillion Hub

Grant awarded: £38,965

- Solar panels to offset electricity cost - annually the highest building cost
- Installation of batteries and an inverter for storing solar panel energy.

Estimated financial savings and carbon savings:

- The reduction in electricity bills has been the significant benefit
- The scheme has also allowed for an EV car charger on site linked to the system.



"The grant allowed us to install the most efficient solar panels on the market onto the building and have battery storage for any excess power generated. This has made a significant difference in reducing the overall electricity bills for the building and making it a much more sustainable venue for the community. The project has inspired us to now have an EV charger on site and secure another grant for solar powered lighting for our car park."
Andrew Hodgson (Charity Trustee) of Ramsey Pavilion Hub



Net Zero Villages Projects

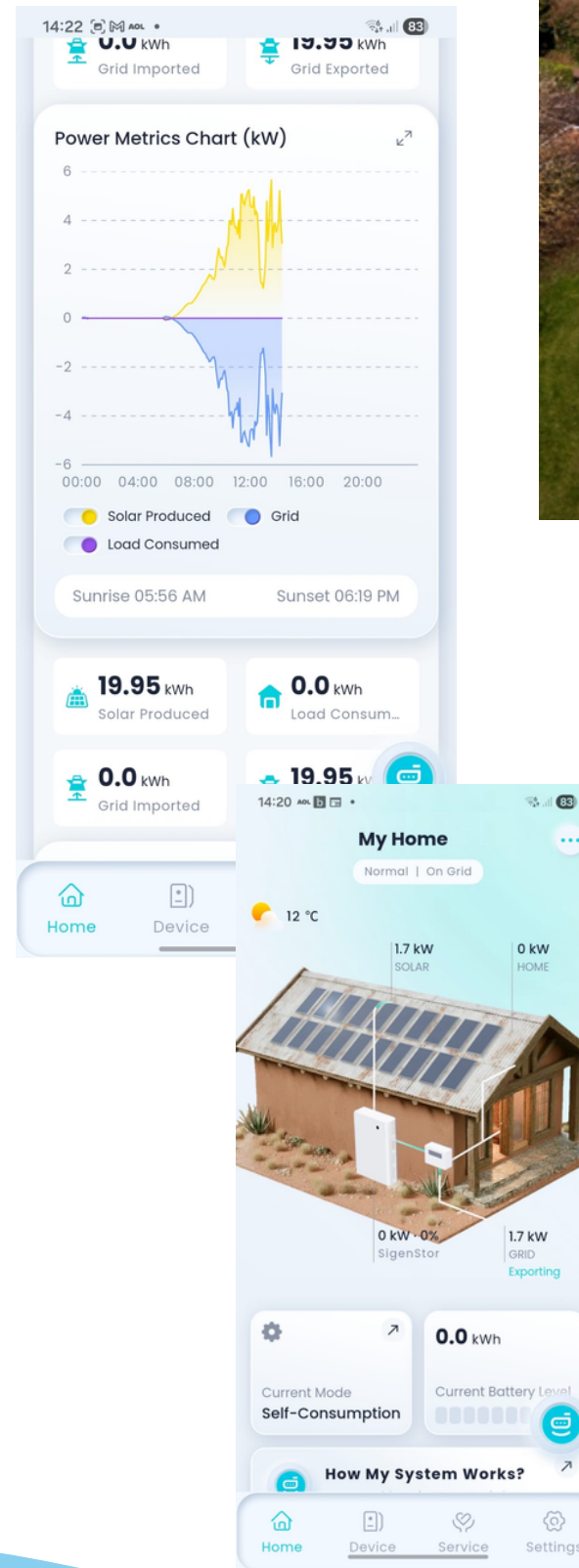
Southoe and Midloe Community Hub

Grant awarded: £20,027.08

- Part funding for a PV heating system combining solar photovoltaic (PV) panels with electric heating systems.
- Helping to transform the church nave into a vibrant community space for all.

Estimated financial savings and carbon savings:

- Very first reading on 17 March 19.95kwh of solar produced and 19.95 kwh exported to the grid.



"We were thrilled to receive this generous grant from the Net Zero Villages Grant Scheme, which brings us a step closer to transforming our church nave into a vibrant community space for all. This funding will help us create a sustainable, welcoming hub where people can connect, learn, and support one another. We are excited about the possibilities this opens up for our village and grateful for the backing that makes this vision possible."

Angela Ellmer, Secretary
Southoe and Midloe Community Hub Project



Net Zero Villages Projects

Southoe and Midloe Community Hub



Net Zero Villages Projects

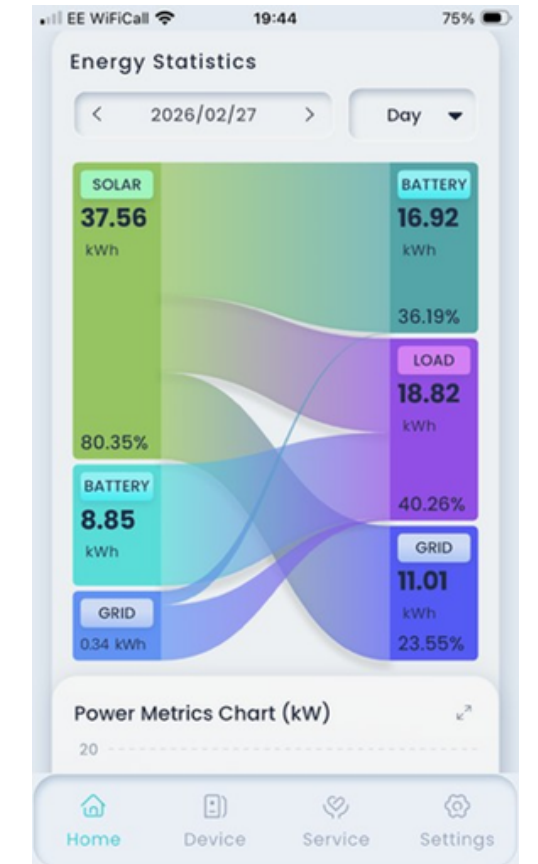
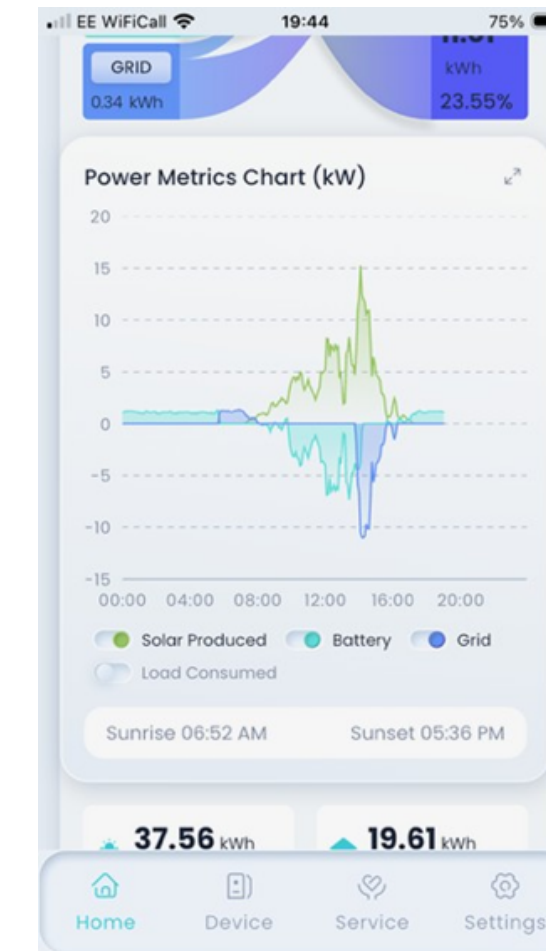
Stilton Parish Council

Grant awarded: £25,598.10

- Pavilion solar panels and storage batteries
- Skate Park LED bulb lighting replacement.

Estimated financial savings and carbon savings:

- CO2 savings on Pavilion of 10kg CO2/day measured by battery storage software
- Too soon to be able to fully document. Initial indication is an increase from 45% to 97%. Next EPC due February 2027
- 8 months of the year to use no electricity from National Grid
- Skate Park lighting costs reduced by approx. 30%.



“The addition of the battery storage system for our existing Solar PV system has improved our efficiency. Before installation 55% energy from the grid, now predicted to be 7% from the grid, for the same consumption in the building... will increase the viability of changing our gas boilers to Heat pumps in the future.”

John Leonard, Parish Councillor



Net Zero Villages Projects

Warboys Parish Council

Grant awarded: £35,000

- New Community Centre build utilised the Net Zero grant award contributing to and enabling the installation of a Single VRF (Variable refrigerant flow) Heat Pump
- State-of-the-art technology will maximise energy efficiency.

Estimated financial savings and carbon savings:

- New building so monitoring and the first couple of years will be trial and error while adjusting settings to run in parallel with the solar panels.



“...delighted to be awarded the Net Zero Villages Grant. The Parish Council is committed to reducing its carbon footprint, ...The building opened 1st October 2025 and the council are monitoring the energy efficiency and next year aims to introduce a webpage dedicated to the energy efficient building...state-of-the-art technology that will maximise energy efficiency and prevent negative impacts to the environment.”

Dr Sheila Withams, Chair of Warboys Parish Council



Net Zero Villages Projects

Yaxley Amenity Halls

Grant awarded: £16,995 (£255 underspend repaid)

- Tackling Energy Use at Yaxley Parish Council's Community Halls (The Amenity Centre and Queens Park Hall)
- Installation of batteries and an inverter for storing solar panel energy.

Estimated financial savings and carbon savings:

Reduction in electric bill

- Sept 24 £266.22
- Sept 25 £105.88.



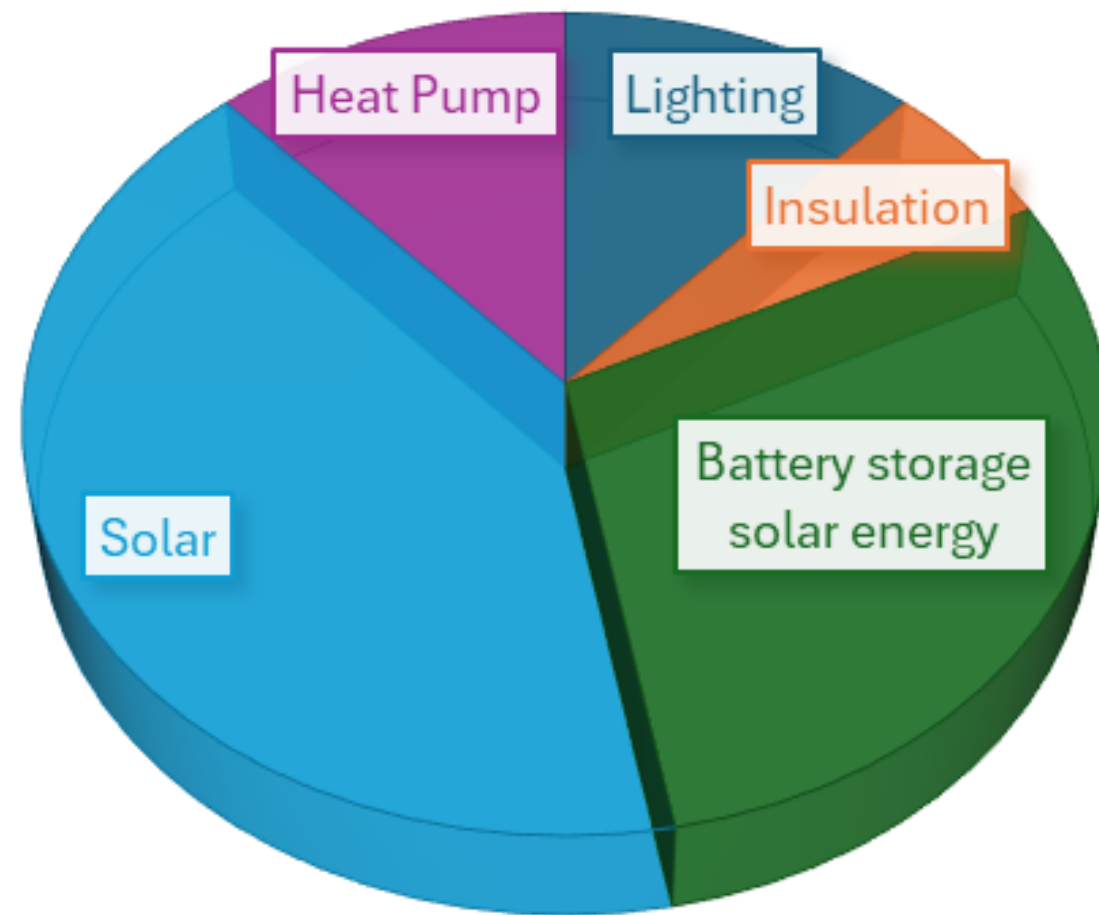
"Since installing solar batteries, our electricity costs have dropped significantly, making the running of the amenity centre far more efficient and sustainable. Solar storage has transformed our energy use - lower bills and smarter, more efficient operations across the amenity centre site. By storing solar energy, we can maximise the use of renewable power, cut electricity expenses, and ensure long-term savings while reducing our environmental footprint."

Helen Taylor, Clerk Yaxley Parish Council



Summary of project areas

TACKLING ENERGY USE



Plus one project enabling access to public transport

Ongoing Project Monitoring

All projects will be contacted 12 months after completion to identify cost and carbon savings generated and assess the outcomes and longer-term benefits delivered. Monitoring will focus on the extent to which projects have achieved the following objectives:

- Reduction in carbon emissions.
- Reduction in energy consumption.
- Reduction in the running costs of community facilities.
- Improved access to public transport, local services, or active and low-carbon transport options.

Projects will be asked to provide qualitative and quantitative evidence where available, including energy bills, carbon savings estimates, user feedback, case studies, and examples of behaviour change or wider community benefits.

